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NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU

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LECTURE CXXIII.

CAN THE MEDITERRANEAN BE CLEARED?

WILL 8TH ARMY AND AMERICANS TURN THE SCALES?

(*CHARLES P. HART in the Illustrated Weekly of India*).

As the largest 'no man's land,' in the present war, the Mediterranean holds a unique and vital interest for all parties in the present struggle. About six times as large as the North Sea, the steaming distances in these often stormy and arduous waters are much greater than is generally remembered. It is roughly as far from Gibraltar to Malta as it is from Gibraltar to England, and very little less from Malta to Port Said and for both parties hostile bases inconveniently straddle the sea lanes.

The Straits of Gibraltar are only 14 miles wide, though the lack of an air-field there is a severe handicap to the Allies. The Italian base of Pantellaria splits the already too narrow Sicilian Channel. Only 62 miles of water separate Pantellaria from Sicilian Coast, and about 40 miles, almost certainly liberally mined, is the width of straits on the Tunis side of the Island. Malta itself is as near Sicily as Pantellaria—the two Islands themselves are only about 125 miles apart, distances absolutely negligible as far as modern air-craft are concerned. The sea-way between Crete and the Libyan Coast is little more than 180 miles wide. Cyprus enjoys a greater measure of safety, being over 300 miles distant both from the Dodecanese and Crete.

BALANCE UPSET.

In such constricted waters, both contestants have to walk warily. Until the fall of France, allied naval superiority in the Mediterranean was so overwhelming that Italy's neutrality was guaranteed. Dependent on their motherland even for much of their water supply, Italy's North African possessions were in no case to withstand a blockade such as Britain could at that time have imposed.

Allied shipping came and went throughout the Mediterranean at least as safely as it did outside. But with the loss of the French Fleet, the Allies became much the weaker power in the Mediterranean. From that date, none but Malta supply convoys of the utmost importance ran the gauntlet in the middle sea. All other allied shipping, even including supplies for Libya, went *via* the Cape, imposing an extra period of 14 weeks on the length of the voyage.

For Italy the fall of France opened up considerable but still perilous opportunities. She held Brindisi on the north-west, Tobruk in the south-east, Tripoli on the south-west and Rhodes and the Dodecanese in the north-east. It was a good hand, strategically, but marred by several flaws which did not appear on the surface. The land route from Tripoli to Tobruk is long and waterless, by sea the way is dangerous both from the natural hazards of reef and shoal and from the British air and sea attack.

Rhodes is as bombable from Cyprus as Cyprus is from Rhodes. Rhodes and the neighbouring Dodecanese have been lavishly developed by Mussoloni. They were planned to serve as the base for the Italian Navy's E-boats; Leros was made the sub-marine base, and Maritza and Calato were made the main air-fields. Scarpanto and Stampalia were made the scene of secondary bases for light naval craft and sub-marines.

Theoretically, such bases controlled the Dardanelles and made an admirable sallyport for attacks on Allied shipping as it diverged from Suez. But the memorable raids made by Admiral Cunningham in August 1940 put the Italian garrisons on the defensive. With the assistance of the carriers, the Illustrious and the Eagle and the Cruisers, Illex and Orion, the main bases and air-fields were both heavily bombed from the air and shelled from the sea. The treatment has been repeated occasionally since.

As far as surface naval war-fare is concerned, the Italian Navy has already reached the state at which the steady casualties of convoying and other routine duties have become a serious but unavoidable drain on her strength. But by air she held many trump cards.

To do Italian strategists justice they recognised the preponderance of the air arm (from their stand-point) very early on. Balbo's flights across Europe and to South America were designed to impress the world with Italian prowess in the air. Accompanying the great expansion of the *Regia Aeronautica* was an unrestricted sub-marine-building campaign.

PLAN THAT FAILED.

The plan was quite clear. The air-force was to make first Alexandria and Port Said, and later possibly Malta, Cyprus and Suez, untenable for the British Navy and merchant ships. Driven out to sea, they were to be met by submarine attacks on an unprecedented scale.

Unfortunately for the plan, the Italian Air-force did not succeed in making Malta untenable for the Navy, despite lavish German assistance. Alexandria and Port Said have been less affected still.

Conditions in the Mediterranean, therefore, had reached something of a dead-lock which is now being resolved in the United Nations' favour.

WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY.

21—11—42 to 27—11—42.

North Africa.—In an all-out attempt to save the African theatre Germans are rushing troops and planes from RUSSIA and NORWAY. In fear of an invasion on the European coast itself Axis forces in GREECE are strengthening the defences in SALONICA and the Gulf of CASANDRA. The area near ALEXANDROUPOLIS is being mined. The Italians are reinforcing the DODECANESE. According to the latest information the Germans have also occupied TOULON, and part of the French Fleet there has scuttled itself.

On Nov. 18, the German Commander in TUNISIA sent an ultimatum to General Barrie, commanding the French Forces there to evacuate but the answer was a refusal followed by an attack. The French Army has so far successfully resisted all German attempts to seize the coastal road from TUNIS to TRIPOLI.

Allied forces by-passing TUNIS have bottled up the Axis in a narrow 50-mile neck of land between BIZERTA and TUNIS where a fierce battle is now raging. Important forces deploying from Lake Chad are trying to cut the road between EL-AGHEILA and TRIPOLI. The movement of Axis transports between PANTELLARIA and CAPE BON has been impeded by Allied long-range fighters. British bombers from MALTA have attacked the aerodromes in SICILY. Turin, already bombed eight times since the Libyan operations began, was again attacked on Nov. 18 and 20.

The whole of FRENCH WEST AFRICA, as Darlan announced on Nov. 23, has lined up with the Allies. It is a vast territory, with an area of 1,800,000 square miles, and a population of 15 millions. It includes the important port

of DAKAR, with its fine harbour, where lies a fleet of French warships consisting of the 35,000-ton battleship RICHELIEU (damaged), 3 cruisers (7,000 tons), 3 destroyers (3,000 tons) and a number of submarines.

In CYRENAICA, the enemy withdrawing from the Scaleidima—Antelat escarpment evacuated BENGHAZI on Nov. 20 and JEDABAYA and the JALO OASIS on Nov. 23.

Atrocious weather is impeding operatiors.

German and Italian planes destroyed on the ground between EL ALAMEIN and DERNA number no fewer than 500, apart from the large number shot down in combat. The allies have retaken over 120 enemy landing grounds from DABA to MECCHILI. Axis losses in men was 75,000 against 14,000 Allied.

'We have decisively won the first round', says Sir Alexander. 'The enemy is very groggy but the battle will not be ours until he is lying senseless.'

Russia.—In RUSSIA the war has taken a dramatic turn. The besiegers are being besieged. The siege of STALINGRAD has been lifted. Soviet troops in a pincer-movement to the North-west and South of the city are closing in. The northern forces have advanced 25 miles across the Don elbow and have gained a hold on the STALINGRAD-KHARKOV Railway.

On the Don front they have advanced three to six miles forcing the Don river between KLETSKAYA and KALACH. A big Soviet relief force has joined hands with the STALINGRAD garrison. The Germans now appear to be hopelessly trapped at STALINGRAD between the Don and the Volga.

In the CAUCASUS they have fared no better. In the ORDZHONIKIDZE region the Germans have been out-fought and out-manoeuvred and are in full flight south-east of NALCHIK.

Russian forces have broken through the German positions on the RZHEV front, west of MOSCOW.

The Solomons.—In the naval action of Nov. 14-15 between the U. S. and the Japanese surface forces in the GUADALCANAR area the enemy's losses were:—1 battleship (or heavy cruiser) sunk; 3 large cruisers sunk; one destroyer sunk; 1 cruiser damaged and 1 destroyer damaged. On Nov. 18 flying fortresses attacked Japanese cargo vessels in the BUIN area at the South-west end of BOUGAINVILLE Island in the SOLOMONS. On the same day Allied Army and Marine Corps advanced in GUADALCANAR to the west of point Cruz. On Nov. 21 eleven attack missions were carried out on enemy instalations in GUADALCANAR.

New Guinea.—Through out the week fierce fighting continued in the BUNA—GONA area. The Allies have occupied GONA.

The Aleutians.—There was renewed Japanese air activity over Attu.

Portuguese Timor.—The Japanese have occupied LANTEM in Portuguese Timor.

China.— It is expected that Chinese traffic on the CHEKIANG—KIANGSI Railway interrupted by Japanese invasions in the summer will soon be resumed. The U. S. Army Air Force attacked LUNGLING on Nov. 20 SANCHAN Island and CANTON.

French Indo-China.—American air-craft raided HAIPHONG on Nov. 22.

Burma.—The R. A. F. is now carrying out raids on Burmese territory almost every day. On Nov. 17 the targets were buildings at KALEMYO and the aerodrome at RANGOON; on Nov. 18, the aerodromes at MEIKTILA; on Nov. 20, MAGWE and AKYAB, on Nov. 22, the Burmese rail road repair centre at MANDALAY and on Nov. 25, the railway station at MYINGYAN and the aerodromes at HEPO, MINGALADON and MEIKTILA.

Miscellaneous :—

(1) M. Pétain has practically abdicated in favour of M. Laval. While still retaining the title of head of state to signify French sovereignty Pétain has appointed Laval head of the Government with full powers and as his presumptive successor. Thus Laval becomes the shadow of a shadow, the dictator of a State which has ceased to exist.

(2) *Genl. Dastier de la Vigerie* who held one of the highest commands in the French Air Force has come to London to join De Gaulle.

(3) On Nov. 20, the Canadian—ALASKA railway was opened and the first convoy of lorries left for FAIRBANKS in ALASKA.

(4) To date, the war has cost U. S. approximately 60,000 million dollars or twice the total cost of the last war.

(5) Sir Stafford Cripps has left the war Cabinet and become Minister of Air-craft Production. Mr Herbert has been included in the war Cabinet. Mr. Anthony Eden will be the Leader of the House of Commons in the place of Sir Stafford Cripps. Lord Cranborne, appointed Lord Privy Seal, is succeeded by Col. Oliver Stanley in his previous office of Colonial Secretary.

(6) Marshal Badoglio, the 'Conqueror' of Abyssina, it is reported, has headed a movement for ITALY to conclude a separate peace with the Allies.

(7) An Agreement has been reached by which the U. S. will safeguard French economic interests in the WEST INDIES, while the French naval forces there will be immobilised.

(8) A heavily armed Japanese raider of 10,000 tons has been destroyed and sunk in the Indian Ocean by an Indian minesweeper and a Dutch tanker.

ALLIED Air Raids over ENEMY and ENEMY-occupied COUNTRIES.

Date. Targets.	Aircraft losses for Allies	Aircraft losses for Enemies
16—11—42 (Monday).		
EUROPE.		
No information available.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
Barges in BENGHAZI harbour.		
Transport aircraft in BENGHAZI.		6 planes.
Enemy positions in the JEDABAYA area.		
The aerodrome at TUNIS and **the Naval base** at BIZERTA.		
RUSSIA.		
Air combats all over the Eastern Front.		
FAR EAST.		
Jap positions in the BUNA—GONA area (N. Guinea) KISKA (Aleutians).		
Jap reinforcements in GUADALCANAR (Solomons).		
17—11—42 (Tuesday).		
EUROPE.		
NIGHT:—		
Locomotives in Northern FRANCE and BELGIUM.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
The dock area at BENGHAZI..		
The aerodrome at BARCE.		
Enemy vehicles south of BENGHAZI.		
An enemy tanker near the coast of TRIPOLITANIA.		
JEDABAYA.		
Aerodrome at TUNIS.		
MEDITERRANEAN.		
An aerodrome in SICILY.		
RUSSIA.		
Air combats and aircraft on the aerodromes all along the entire RUSSIAN front.		

Date. Targets.	Aircraft losses for Allies.	Aircraft losses for Enemies.
17—11—42 (Tuesday)—cont.		
FAR EAST.		
Aerodromes at RANGOON and MAGWE (Burma).		
Enemy retreating in the BUNA area (N. Guinea).		
MAOBIASE and **BOBONARO** (TIMOR).		
Enemy shipping in RABAUL harbour.		
Aerodromes at BUIN (Solomons) and LAE (N. Guinea).		
18—11—42 (Wednesday)		
EURORE.		
DAY:—		
Nazi submarine bases at LA PALLICE and LORIENT.		
Railway targets in Northern FRANCE and HOLLAND.	3 planes.	
The FIAT Aircraft works at TURIN (Italy).		
NORTH AFRICA.		
Axis remants fleeing along the **coastal** road to EL AGHEILA.		
TUNIS and BIZERTA.		
RUSSIA.		
Air combats all over the Russian battle field.		
FAR EAST.		
Enemy installations and positions in the BUNA area (N. Guinea).		
The aerodrome at LAE (N. Guinea).		
The harbour at RABAUL (N. Britain).		
The aerodrome at GASMATA.		
Buildings at KALEMYO (Burma).		
The aerodrome at MEIKTILA (Burma).		
19—11—42 (Thursday).		
EUROPE.		
DAY:—		
Railway engines, goodstrains and lorries in FRANCE, BELGIUM and HOLLAND.	2 planes.	2 planes.

Date	Targets.	Aircraft losses for Allies.	Aircraft losses for Enemies.
19—11—42 (Thursday)—cont.			
	NORTH AFRICA.		
	Axis transports near EL AGHEILA (Libya).		
	The aerodrome at TUNIS.		
	The Naval base at BIZERTA.		
	A vessel off TUNISIA.		
	MEDITERRANEAN.		
	Aerodromes in SICILY.		
	RUSSIA.		
	Air combats all over the Russian battle front.		
	FAR EAST.		
	Naval units off BUNA (N. Guinea).		
	KOEPANG (Timor).		
	The aerodrome at MAGWE (Burma).		
20—11—42 (Friday).			
	EUROPE.		
DAY:—			
	Ground targets in Northern FRANCE and HOLLAND.		
	An enemy convoy off the DUTCH coast.		
	The air factory and other military objectives at TURIN (Italy).		
	NORTH AFRICA.		
	Axis concentrations at EL AGHEILA (Libya).		
	The harbour at TRIPOLI.		
	Workshops and barracks at BIZERTA.		
	RUSSIA.		
	Air combats all over the Russian front.		
	FAR EAST.		
	Jap troops in the BUNA area (N. Guinea).		
	The harbour at RABAUL (N. Britain).		
	KAVIENG.		
	The aerodrome at POKOKU (Burma).		

Date.	Targets.	Aircraft losses for Allies.	Aircraft losses for Enemies.
21—11—42 (Saturday).			
	EUROPE.		
NIGHT:—			
	Laying mines in enemy coastal waters.		
	NORTH AFRICA.		
	Axis forces at JEDABAYA.		
	TRIPOLI.		
	The aerodrome near TUNIS.		
	RUSSIA.		
	Air combats all over the Russian Front.	34 planes.	60 planes.
	FAR EAST.		
	Enemy installations on GUADALCANAR.		
	Air combats over BUIN (Solomons).		
	KAVIENG.		
	The aerodromes at MINGALADON and TOUNGOO (Burma).		
	MANDALAY (Burma).		
22—11—42. (Sunday).			
	EUROPE.		
	The industrial and communication centre of STUTTGART (Germany). }		10 planes.
	Goods trains in N. FRANCE. }		
	A supply ship in the CHANNEL. }		
	NORTH AFRICA.		
	The aerodrome at BIZERTA.		
	TUNIS.		
	Axis troops in the EL AGHEILA area.		
	MEDITERRANEAN.		
	The aerodromes at COMICO, GELA and TRAPANI (Sicily).		
	Enemy transport aircraft between SICILY and TUNIS.		
	RUSSIA.		
	Air combats all over the RUSSIAN Front.		
	FAR EAST.		
	Jap troops in the GONA–BUNA area.		
	The aerodrome at BUKA (Solomons).		
	Aerodromes in Burma.		
	The harbour and shipping at AKYAB.		

ENEMY Air Raids over Allied Territories.

Date. Targets.	Aircraft losses for Enemies.	Aircraft losses for Allies
17—11—42 (Tuesday).		
BRITAIN.		
No air attack anywhere.		
EGYPT.		
Port SAID	1 plane.	
RUSSIA.		
STALINGRAD.		
18—11—42 (Wednesday).		
BRITAIN.		
No air raid.		
RUSSIA.		
STALINGRAD.		
FAR EAST.		
Australian forces near BUNA (NEW GUINEA).		
19—11—42 (Thursday).		
BRITAIN.		
No air attack anywhere in Britain.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
ALGIERS and **BONE.**		
RUSSIA.		
STALINGRAD.		
FAR EAST.		
The airfield at GUADALCANAR (Solomons).		
20—11—42 (Friday).		
No air raid.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
ALGIERS.		

Date. Targets.	Aircraft losses for Enemies	Aircraft losses for Allies
20—11—42 (Friday)—cont.		
RUSSIA.		
STALINGRAD.		
FAR EAST.		
No information available.		
21—11—42 (Saturday).		
No air raid.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
Allied forces advancing into TUNISIA.		
FAR EAST.		
Australian forces advancing on BUNA (NEW GUINEA)	2 planes.	
22—11—42 (Sunday).		
BRITAIN.		
No air attack.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
ALGIERS and **ORAN.**		
FAR EAST.		
Americans positions on GUADALCANAR (Solomons).		
23—11—42. (Monday).		
BRITAIN.		
No air raid anywhere in BRITAIN.		
NORTH AFRICA.		
Allied troops in TUNIS.		
RUSSIA.		
STALINGRAD.		
FAR EAST.		
Allied positions near the BUNA area.		

SIDE LIGHTS.

MEDITERRANEAN MUSINGS. Politicians, may take credit for the recent operations as due to their agitation to open a second front and Hitler may state that it is only a move on President Roosevelt's part to regain his popularity lost in the recent general elections, but the credit for the thoroughness with which the pincer movement in AFRICA was planned and executed undoubtedly goes to Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt, and their military staffs.

The convoying of the Expeditionary Force was by itself a great achievement. The tonnage ran to six figures; the trip was more than a thousand miles to ALGIERS. The sea was infested with U-boats, of which 13 were sunk, with but some slight damage to a single American troopship. Not a life was lost. Home-based aircraft, co-operating with the Gibraltar unit made a thousand sorties, each lasting many hours. During these sorties 1,250,000 miles were covered in about 8,000 flying hours. The sailing was so timed that much of the journey was done in the dark.

The importance of these operations is well brought out by responsible statements made during the week. Admiral Cunningham has pointed out, 'If North AFRICA were cleared of the Axis troops, fast convoys could get through the Mediterranean. This would save some two million tons of shipping.' Mr. Alexander has stated, 'We have hit the Axis in the Mediterranean where he was least able to take it and the successes in that theatre would set in train many developments which must have increasingly embarrassing consequences to the enemy and bring direct relief to RUSSIA. In the Pacific, no less than in EUROPE I feel the tide is turning; and it is all sea-power'. Mr. Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister has added, 'we have made the Mediterranean not only safe but I hope I shall soon go beyond that and make it the jumping-off place for a great offensive'.

Previous campaigns had shown that owing to long distances the chasing of the German forces from EGYPT to the Atlantic coast was by no means easy. But the present simultaneous attack from the west, though MOROCCO also is a thousand miles from LIBYA, is eventually bound to hold the enemy in a pincer grip. At any rate, it will shorten the Allied supply route which now lies all the way round the Cape. It will also deprive GERMANY of the huge supplies which she had been extorting from French North AFRICA. During the past six months alone, 3,65,000 tons of wine, 5,000 tons of meat, 2,60,000 tons of cereals and 1,35,900 tons of fruits had crossed from North AFRICA to MARSEILLES, of which 90 per cent were subsequently transported to GERMANY.

The expulsion of the Axis from North AFRICA will reopen the Mediterranean. With TUNIS and BIZERTA in Allied hands SICILY may be neutralised, if not sterilised. From North AFRICA, ITALY can be attacked. ITALY seems now ripe enough to fall from the Axis side. The Italians who were never interested in the fight are not likely to resist. Landing in ITALY is by no means difficult.

Hitler must now decide whether he should defend or abandon ITALY to its fate and retire to the Brenner. Mussolini must also now make his choice whether he should continue to fight on Hitler's side, while Hitler may desert him at any moment, or make peace with the Allies and be attacked by Hitler from the rear. For him it is now a choice in fact of an attack or by the R. A. F. or by the *Luftwaffe*—a choice pretty difficult to make.

Once the Mediterranean is controlled from BIZERTA, other prospects open. The Allies will be able to approach the BALKANS, which have not become reconciled at all to the German yoke. From here an attack on the German flank could be developed. It would also bring the Anglo-American drive nearer RUSSIA, thereby solving the question of supplies to this theatre. The supplies to the German armies in Southern RUSSIA can also be intercepted. We do not however forget that all these advantages depend on the successful termination of the Allied operations now going on in TUNISIA.

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DE GAULLE'S DEMUR to the appointment of Darlan as Governor-General of French North AFRICA is based on the substantial services rendered by the fighting French to the Allied Cause. At the time of the French collapse, General de Gaulle, though alone, stood out for a free fighting FRANCE. He rallied the remnants of the free French and built up a group which has now secured the whole of French West AFRICA for the Allies. From August 1941, since air communications were established between AMERICA and AFRICA, French Equatorial AFRICA, under the Fighting French, has received and passed supplies to EGYPT. For this purpose air-bases, fuel-supplies and radio stations have been established at places like FORT LAMY in the CHAD region. Roads have also been built linking strategic points in the Fighting French colonies, with ANGLO-SUDAN. From DOULA and BRAZAVILLE on the south Atlantic coast of French Equatorial AFRICA goods may now be transported through the heart of the continent *via* KHARTOUM to CAIRO. Fighting French colonies have also supplied lead, zinc, coffee and cocoa. Rubber cultivation is being increased in the area to aid the Allied Cause.

WINNING THE FRENCH HEART. Next to the achievements of planning the expedition and the safe convoying of troops should be placed the winning of French hearts and French territory in French North AFRICA within 78 hours of the landing. In the first place, it proves more than anything else the justice of the Allied cause. Secondly, the recapture of TOBRUK did the magic. Rommel's rout from TOBRUK electrified the whole of the MIDDLE EAST and North AFRICA and restored confidence in the Allies' power. Hitler made his own contribution too. His tyranny in FRANCE, his mass executions and other barbarities had horrified French North AFRICA and when the Allies landed the French colonists and the Arab, and Berber population threw themselves into their arms, as of a deliverer.

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TOBRUK 'Historians may explain TOBRUK', said Mr. Churchill but the Eighth Army has done better. It has avenged it'—yes, avenged not only the earlier British capitulation at TOBRUK itself, but also the much earlier tragedies of the German *blitzes*. Never had an army disintegrated so much into bits in a battle of tanks such as Montgomery's; and never was a road of retreat converted so completely into a road of destruction as it was in Rommel's case.

The remnants of the Afrika Korps, it is true, tried to make a stand, first near FUKA, then at MERSA MATRUH and EL ADEM; but it was not, as in the case of Rommel's former retreat in order to regrouph, reinforce and re-advance but only from lack of transport and fuel.

Allied forces are now complete masters of the Desert air and can keep pace with Rommel's retreat however headlong, especially by operating the forward air-fields abandoned by the enemy. Allies may now get their own supplies both by land and sea, while Rommel must be running terribly short of petrol owing to the destruction of his lorries and dumps. Not a single Axis tanker has crossed the Mediterranean during the past month.

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A GHASTLY EPISODE of the Desert battle is the callous abandonment of their Italian comrades by the Germans in their flight. Five Italian Infantry divisions which tried to move back from the central and southern sectors of the fleeing army were abandoned, without either transport or supplies. Thousands of these wretched men were lost in the desert; many dying of hunger and thirst voluntarily surrendered, while the R. A. F. and ground-parties sent out to discover them have saved a large number from a miserable and terrible death in the desert wastes.

BLACK TREACHERY. There can be no better proof of the magnitude of the recent Allied triumph in North AFRICA than the moral debasement that has now overtaken Hitler. When he signed the Armistice Terms in 1940, Pétain took Hitler's promise for a soldier's word of Honour and expected Hitler to carry it out, as he would himself do. All through the troubled period which followed Pétain loyally stood by his own word. But Hitler who broke his word first by incorporating ALSACE—LORRAINE broke it again by seizing what was once occupied FRANCE. It may be supposed that Pétain's present abnegation and transfer of power to Laval betray the sinking, if not the breaking, of the old Marshal's heart at this the latest perfidy of Hitler.

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FRENCH AFRICAN MUSLIMS. The Muslim population of French North AFRICA totals approximately 15 million. Under the Vichy régime they were inveigled into FRANCE and thence transported to Germany to work in factories and to RUSSIA to fight. A number of them were compelled to work on the experimental production of poison gases.

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SPAIN. BRITAIN has categorically informed SPAIN and PORTUGAL that in the present expedition to the African Coast the rights and interests of both those countries would be scrupulously respected. And the best proof lies in the fact that though the Spanish Gold Coast flanks French MOROCCO on the south, though Spanish MOROCCO faces GIBRALTAR on the north, and though Spanish and Portuguese islands such as the AZORES, MADEIRA, the CANARIES and the CAPE VERDE ISLANDS face the 'straits of Dakar' the Allies have by-passed them, while, there is no doubt, the Axis, if in a similar position would have laid violent hands on all of them.

Senor Suner, the former Foreign Minister of SPAIN who was prepared to plunge his country into war on a mad-cap attempt to get back GIBRALTAR was dismissed in September, and the key-note of Franco's policy has been to repair the ravages of the Spanish Civil war and to plan for economic independence. The legacy left behind by the Civil War is a public debt of 5,000,000 lire to ITALY and another heavy amount to GERMANY, both of which are being collected with Shylockian cruelty and are being repaid by selling Spanish oil, almonds and fruits to ITALY and Spanish iron, zinc, lead and pyrites to GERMANY. On the other hand, in sympathy and appreciation of Spanish difficulties BRITAIN has advanced loans on different occasions amounting to £ 6,500,000. In 1941 BRITAIN also agreed to buy Spanish oranges and mercury in exchange for a supply of wheat. In 1941, the

American Red Cross Mission distributed 4,000,000 dollars' worth of food and fed about 1,000,000 men, women and children in the hunger-belt in the MADRID-BARCELONA area.

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PORTUGAL'S attitude is one of isolation and suspicion of GERMANY. Her friendship with BRITAIN dates back to 1294 when a commercial treaty was signed between the two countries. The Treaties of LONDON, of 1373 and 1386 at a later date make for mutual defence. Portuguese armies had co-operated with the British in the war of the Spanish Succession, and later, in the Peninsular war. The Japanese occupation of Portuguese-TIMOR last year and the discovery in 1938 of a German document for the seizure of PORTUGAL itself by GERMANY have developed a hostile attitude to the Axis.

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BOMB VICTIMS 'During a recent raid on Genoa', writes the Times of India, 'a British aircraft is reported to have picked out the statue of Mussolini in one of the large new squares of the city. Perhaps the stone or bronze effigy of the pinchbeck Caesar was scarcely worth wasting a bomb on, although the false gods and idols of misguided peoples might well be obliterated from the face of an agonised world. But the bomb in its career of destruction at times comes upon strange victims. Hitler's hordes have a special penchant for picking out whatever inspires, delights and humanises the spirit of man. Thus religion, art, history, law and literature have all suffered at their hands; churches, schools, colleges, hospitals, libraries, law courts and art galleries have received special attention from the *Luftwaffe*. Among the curious "finds" of Hitler's aerial emissaries a short while ago was the "umble 'ome" of Uriah Heep at Canterbury. The bomb, like Justice, is blind, and makes no distinctions between the high and the humble, the cottage and the castle, heroes und villains, history and fiction. But there is a difference of spirit between emptying one's fury upon the literary or religious landmarks of a cathedral town and bowling over the aggressive image of a blood-stained bully in an important port or naval base.'

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HORRIBLE. Gruesome tales of Jewish persecution continue to come from POLAND. According to a report which has reached the Polish Government in LONDON Herr Himmler's programme is to exterminate half the Jewish population in POLAND, for which a special battalion commanded by S. S. men has also been appointed. According to Dr. Stephen Wise, a Jewish leader in WASHINGTON the U. S. State Department has received reports stating that Hitler had ordered the

extermination of all Jews in German occupied EUROPE by the end of 1942. Half the Jewish population in WARSAW has already been killed off. A price of 50 reichsmarks has been set for each Jewish corpse and the dead bodies are exhumed in order to be 'processed' into soap and other war materials. Old people and cripples are led to the cemeteries and shot. Others are loaded in trains at the rate of 150 for a truck which will hold 40 only, and the floor is strewn with lime or chlorine and the doors are sealed, so that when the trains arrive at their destination, half of them are found dead. The survivors are sent to special camps to be mass-murdered. Thus a quarter million Jews had already been exterminated by the end of September. Only the young and strong have been left alive to meet the needs of slave labour.

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CIVIL DEFENCE. Civil Defence, declared Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava, Member of Civil Defence, on November 21, is in essence, the defence of citizens by citizens. It is an organisation of the civilian population by the Civil authorities, in which non-official co-operation is welcomed. The boy scouts and the medical profession can be useful. Civil Defence deals with air raid precautions, before a raid, with rescue work during an air raid, and repair to the damages, after a raid. It includes the evacuation of the non-essential population from danger zones, the maintenance of the morale of the people who 'stay put' and the care of those who had been rendered homeless in an air raid. There are 5 A. R. P. services. The Wardens' service, the communications (Messengers') service, the Rescue service, the Casualties service, and the Fire fighting service. Women too, in spite of the complications of the Purdah may help in house-to-house visits and lectures to their sisters in their localities, on self-help and fire fighting.

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BURMA. The Japanese have changed the name of the 'BURMA Independence Army' to 'the BURMA Defence Army'. The change is significant. The Burmese are no longer to think of their independence but to defend, if they can, their Japanese masters. This is G. E. A.—Greater East ASIA.

Japanese Naval Losses Since Pearl Harbour to Nov. 14-15.

		Sunk or Destroyed.	Probably Destroyed.	Damaged.
Battleships	...	2	...	5
Aircraft Carriers	...	6	...	6
Cruisers	...	27	2	27
Destroyers	...	45	4	18
Total	...	**80**	**6**	**56**

A communiqué issued on November 19, of the Solomons battle also gave losses as one battleship or heavy cruiser sunk, three large cruisers sunk, one battleship damaged, one cruiser damaged and one derstroyer damaged, but added that these may include some which have been included in the earlier statements and in this table.

The latest figures available of Japan's naval strength, given in Brassey's Naval Annual for 1941, showed that she possessed 10 battleships, 15 aircraft carriers, 37 cruisers of various types, with several more shown as under construction, 88 first class destroyers, and 32 second class destroyers, and torpedo boats.

UNTIL WE HAVE VICTORY OUR BOYS WON'T COME HOME.

Mrs. Roosevelt.

New York, Nov., 20.

Our boys over there will tell you that there is very little grumbling among the British people about this or that little thing. I never heard a real complaint.

I think our boys will get a sense, which is almost impossible to describe, of the indomitable spirit of the British people as a whole, whatever their circumstances—a spirit which binds them together and makes them work and fight at home as well as in the army.

They are taking whatever they have to take in order to win the war. If we can voluntarily give work and make sacrifices in the same spirit that the British people are giving, and our boys in the fighting forces are giving, we may be able to shorten the war, and to save some lives that mean more to us than our own.

I saw our boys on airfields, at naval stations, and in every type of group which makes up our Army.

I have a deep sense of pride and satisfaction in our Army, and I have a deep sense of pride and satisfaction in our officers and men. The way in which they are doing their jobs, whatever they may be, is heartening. We are not yet, in less than a year of war facing what Britain has faced for over three years of war. I asked some of them whether they had made friends in the neighbourhood, and they replied enthusiastically: 'Oh, we have a lot of friends around here.'

There is going to be no whining by our boys, no matter what they have to face. The British are taking whatever they have to take in order to win the war. We have not the pressure here of an invasion. We have not the man-power problem that they have with their smaller population and far-flung

battlefronts, which are just as wide as ours but I think we have some points to consider. Time is short, so I hope you will say with me to every boy we love no matter where he is on land, sea or in the air :

God bless you wherever you are, and let us be sure to remember to hold our fingers up in the 'V' sign and translate that symbol into tangible work and sacrifice, for until we have victory our boys won't come home.

BRITAIN'S PART IN N. AFRICA.

A MATCHLESS SAGA OF HISTORY.

Wendell Willkie.

New York, Nov., 20.

No one could have had the experience I had when I visited England during the *blitz* of 1940-41, and ever forget not only the courage, but the infinite patience of the British people under circumstances which seemed almost beyond human endurance.

I hope my fellow Americans will continue to pour out their hearts and their national resources to the limit in grateful appreciation of those great defenders of liberty.

I say it to you with all pride in what our arms are accomplishing in North Africa, that it will be written in history that it was Gen. Montgomery's magnificent ability at the battle of El Alamein in the early part of September that made possible everything my country is doing to-day.

When the war is over, the story of Britain's part in North Africa yesterday and to-day will be one of the noble sagas of history.

TYRANNY WILL BE ENDED.

Mr. CHURCHILL'S MESSAGE.

The history of recent years has shown that, when aggressive nations set out, to steal lands and destroy the freedom of their neighbours, civilisation everywhere is imperilled.

When the war is won, it will be our first duty to watch over the victories we have gained, and ensure that no new tyranny is again allowed to loose tragedy upon the whole world.

It is not too soon for those who are now beating down these tyrants in the war to prepare vigilance, which will defend the rights and liberties which our arms will have rescued and restored.

Mr. AVERELL HARRIMAN.

He has confidence in the Red Army and the Russian people, and they have implicit confidence in him. He knows that Hitler will be destroyed, and that the Red Army will play a leading role in the glory of this achievement.

The American and British people recognize that we can never give the Russian soldiers enough to express our appreciation of their fight in our common cause. Food has been taken from the slim British diet to be sent to the Russian people. We are reducing our meat consumption and making it available to Russia in increasing quantities. Last Spring, the British grounded some airplanes in their fighting squadrons in order to strip them for spare parts to take the place of shipments that had been sunk. President Roosevelt has ordered that supplies for Russia should have priority over everything else.

When the last gun has been fired, the Russian people will have in their hearts the knowledge that we did not let them down.

CLOSE COLLABORATION.

M. Stalin feels deeply that the close collaboration of the Soviet Union with the United States and Great Britain should, and must, extend beyond the war if the world is to be wisely reconstructed.

STEPPING-STONES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN.

***Donald Cowie in* "Capital".**

*(With acknowledgements to the **South Indian Bulletin.**)*

Draw a direct line from Australia to Suez, or India to Madagascar, and you inevitably strike one or other of a number of isolated island groups. Their names, Seychelles, Maldives, Chagos, Keeling, are sometimes familiar, but more frequently unknown even to adjacent peoples. It is another freak of this unorthodox war that all are to-day of equal strategic importance with many more-famous places. Indeed, future events may make these islands stepping-stones of the Indian Ocean prime objects of contention in the developing sea struggle, if not vital links in the final chain of victory. Those whom they serve, and are likely to serve, so importantly, should know something about them.

As indicated, the various islands in question dot the Indian Ocean from east to west, and from north to south, along fairly straight crows'-flight lines. Let us examine them, and their present problems, separately, starting in the east, where the Keeling Islands, also known as the Cocos or Borneo Coral Islands, stand about 500 miles south south-west of Java and 1,500 miles north north-west of Freemantle. The islands, some twenty in number, home of a few mixed families and many giant crabs, and producers of guano and coconuts, could be converted into either a British sub-base for control of sea

and air traffic and for the eventual advance against Malaysia, or a Japanese ditto for interference with our Indian Ocean traffic and for an advance westwards.

About 500 miles on from the Keeling Islands towards the middle of the Indian Ocean is a small, isolated piece of rock and earth known to few off-the-map travellers as Apaluria. It has no facilities, but might just carry fuel and other supplies for amphibian aircraft, helping them on their way either to Ouro and Ceylon, or the Chagos group at the dead centre of the ocean. Ouro is equally insignificant, a diminutive coral group about 1,000 miles towards Ceylon from Apaluria and 500 miles from Ceylon itself, but equally feasible as a small supply dump for aircraft, whereas the Chagos group is both big and practicable.

These lonely yet dominating islands cover a circular area of some 76 square miles, and are situated roughly halfway between Sumatra and Africa, or India and Madagascar, or the Arabian Sea and Keeling Islands. Therefore they were used as a coaling station in the days of short-winded ships, that always steamed gratefully into the fine natural harbour of Diego Garcia. Here a large expanse of smooth water, ideal for flying-boats, is enclosed by a long coral reef. The group was formerly known as the Oil Islands, on account of the big production of cocontut oil, and is inhabited by a thousand or so plantation workers of African and Malagasy origin. From Chagos the landbridges, however thin in parts, proceed north to India by way of the Maldive Islands and others and west to Africa via the Seychelles.

There are the coral dots of Pena Molubque, Addon and Suadiva after the Chagos Islands north, then the Maldives from a coral chain almost to Cape Comorin, a perfect screen to the east of Ceylon. They are individually small and undeveloped, with a few Muslim inhabitants of Arab origin who fish and collect coconuts, but again they could be used by shrewd strategists both for supporting air routes and for conducting naval operations.

We must admit that the Japanese, in their use of aircraft with fleets, have radically changed sea strategy ; and we should note carefully how islands, no matter their previous insignificance, have been employed to give the fleets air protection. By jumping from island anchorage to island anchorage, you can supply your aircraft and always enjoy their umbrella. So these islands of the Indian Ocean have their new value.

Between Chagos and the Seychelles, along the line due west, are many rocks, reefs and atolls, none of them more than a hundred miles apart, while the Seychelles themselves cover a huge area, with some 50,000 square miles of coral banks, including the 34 main islands. The harbour of Mahe, the main island, is Port Victoria, and resembles Diego Garcia in its geographical excellence. There has been a naval station there for many years, together

with coal bunkers and oil-storage installations. Giant tortoises, double coconuts and many other natural wonders are found in the idyllic surroundings that led General Gordon to wonder if the original Garden of Eden were not located here. But, more important than that (as Gordon would agree if he were alive to-day) the Seychelles provide the final main link in the stepping-stone chain between east and west across the Indian Ocean. They are roughly 800 miles from Mombassa and the coast of East Africa.

These facts have been given not so much to make a case for any particular course of action, but to provide a background for the action that will undoubtedly develop in the Indian Ocean whether on our initiation or that of the enemy. Thus our invasion of Madagascar was undertaken as an obvious preliminary to further operations in the Indian Ocean, and the enemy similarly occupied the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal with the idea of strengthening his communications westwards.

The huge stretch of water between Africa, India, Sumatra and Australia must be controlled before the south-western battle can be turned against Japan, and we are very fortunate in having, ready-made, a geographical means of spanning the wastes.

GURKHAS' PART IN LIBYAN VICTORY.

New Delhi, Nov. 21.

H. H. the Maharaja of Nepal :

I am glad to learn of the brilliant successes in North Africa, and particularly the news that the Gurkhas and the Punjabis have captured 5,000 Italians. Please convey my congratulations to the Gurkhas who took part in this operation, saying that I am delighted to learn that they are upholding and, indeed, brightening the name of their parents and ancestors and also the pride of the Gurkhas. Please tell them that they have done very well and that I hope that they will continue to do many more acts of bravery while eating the salt of the British Government.

C.-IN-C.'S REPLY.

H. E. the Commander-in-Chief :

I am most grateful for your message of congratulations which I will convey to the Gurkha units with the Eighth Army in Libya. Our Gurkha and Indian troops have fought magnificently and contributed materially to this crushing defeat of Rommel's forces. You will be glad to know that not only have the casualties been surprisingly light, but that some 200 Gurkha soldiers, previously captured by the enemy, have now been rescued and released. Casualties to the enemy have been high, and large numbers of prisoners and quantities of guns and equipment of all kinds are still being collected. I rejoice with you in these brilliant successes, which are a prelude to the final victory of our United Forces.

THE MODERN RECRUIT.

(*The Madras War Review*).

What misconceptions there are in some people's minds about being a soldier! Even after three years of war, the idea of being a private soldier or sepoy seems to frighten many people and they still seem to think that the soldier is some kind of menial with nothing to do but march about with a rifle in his hand. This war has shown very vividly, the evil and disastrous results of that misconceived impression. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for indeed the private soldier of to-day needs to be the most intelligent, educated and highly developed of men.

The training of a recruit is a fascinating education, a physical rebuilding and a moral regeneration. In order to become a self contained and formidable fighting man, the soldier must learn the real essentials of education. He must be able to review a series of events in his mind and condense it into a clear message, which he must write clearly. This is not easy even for a well-educated person. He must be able to find his way on a map, know his position, and be able to report it exactly. It can be readily understood that these two essentials require a good knowledge of Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Geography.

He must become physically fit so that his eyes sparkle with the gladness that comes when limbs move freely, easily overcoming obstacles and long distances. He must become confident and expert in the use of many different weapons. He must be able to dig for hours at a stretch in the sun, without smoke or water, erect barbed wire and protect himself against gas. He must always be seeking to attack his enemy and must be always alert. Above all, he must have an unhesitating habit of willing, immediate, and cheerful obedience to orders.

To accomplish this is not easy for many recruits and that is why the highest standard of material is required. But when the recruit does achieve it, he is a far better, healthier and happier man than most who remain in civil life.

The recruit may feel confused at first when he hears what he has to undergo, but the system has been worked out so well that with the good food which he gets and the good treatment which he receives, coupled with the enthusiasm and intelligence of his instructors, he soon finds himself progressing through his course with cheerfulness and real enthusiasm.

We have heard a great deal during this war about "morale". Indeed the regiment with a high morale can repeatedly rout and defeat many times its own numbers of regiments with low morale.

LORD CLIVE with 3,000 Madrasis defeated an enemy of 50,000 at the Battle of Plassey in Bengal. His energy and enthusiasm had produced such

high morale among his troops that they were ready to do anything and take on anybody. They did it in a storm of pouring rain, lightning and thunder, and the result was astounding.

Regimental pride is closely connected with "morale" and that is why every recruit is taught the history of his regiment. Every Officer should always have one great object in view, to see that his own Battalion has the highest morale and the best fighting spirit in the whole army.

Curiously enough morale is connected with such apparently minor things as saluting, a clean kit, shaving every morning, and personal pride.

It is an astonishing thing how quickly new recruits assimilate the morale of their new regiment, Famous battalions have been cut to pieces over and over again, and new batches of reinforcements have rapidly become just as good as the original soldiers. It is the spirit of the regiment that counts.

There are many other things that go to make up the spirit of the regiment. Regimental sports, the band, regimental concerts, regimental customs and personal connections between the Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men.

It should be the aim of every Commanding Officer to see that when the war is over his men are much more fit for a useful position in civil life than they were as recruits. He cannot, in war time, give them training in civil occupations but he can give them a mental training which will stand them in good stead all their lives.

Any man who learns properly how to obey orders easily learns how to give orders. This means that his mind has been taught to think properly and see things clearly. Therefore, he will learn to adapt himself to whatever occupation later comes to his hand.

It is in this respect that the modern army is so different from the old army, wrong ideas about which are still in the minds of so many people. There is nothing fixed or stereotyped in the army to-day, and originality is always encouraged. When it comes to real war, a man is expected to use his imagination and by every ruse or stratagem to get the better of his enemy.

Stolid ignorance can always be defeated by intelligence. It was soon found out that tough bad characters were no use as Commando Troops. For all types of Guerilla or Commando fighting, high discipline and education are required, since it is the brain that has to be used and physical fitness is attained because the brain directs it.

What is the conclusion that experience of modern Military training brings to the young soldier to-day? It is that it is the finest thing he has ever known. It combines the glamour of the Boy Scouts, the team-spirit of a

college side, the friendship of good companions, with the faith in his leaders and in the great cause for which he is fighting. It makes him in truth, healthy, happy and a magnificent citizen for the peace that we all see in the far distance and which we know is coming to us in full and good measure some day.

AN A B C OF A. R. P.

(ADAPTED).

(*Mr. Seth Drucquer, I. C. S., Special Publicity Officer, Bengal*).

A is that Horrible air raid alarm :
If you will only take shelter, you will come to no harm.

B is your bath-tub ; keep it filled day and night,
With clean water or dirty, any fire-bombs to fight.

C 's Cotton Wool, put some in your ear,
It will lessen the noise of the bombs and your fear.

D is for disc, worn for identity's sake,
And then if you are injured, there will be no mistake.

E stands for Earth ; grow more rice, dal and wheat.
If you do, on your plots, there will be plenty to eat.

F 's for first aid ; all your family should train
In the simple instructions for lessening pain.

G is for glass ; be sure to protect it
With cloth, wire or paper, before splinters have wrecked it

H is for high explosive ; lie down flat on the ground
Chest raised, hands on ears, to deaden the sound.

I 's for incendiaries ; all that you need
To quench them are sandbags and water and speed.

J 's for the Japs ; they'd like to crush you and me
They'd surely succeed if we'd no A. R. P.

K is the kindness and friendly assistance
You must show to the bustee to aid their resistance.

L is for London ; she knew how to take it
But if that's a record—well—your town can break it.

M 's for morale ; keep yours flying high
And then it won't matter if there are Japs in the sky.

N is the nitwit who does nothing but chatter
And repeat doubtful rumours and thinks it won't matter.

O 's obscuration, which means that no light
Must be seen by the Japs from your windows at night.

P 's Pucca Buildings—if you don't in this town.
Make a shelter of yours for the crowds, you're a clown.

Q stands for quietness—when you hear the alert,
Move quietly to shelter ; if you rush, you'll get hurt.

R stands for Rumour ; someone told me at noon
That a Japanese army has invaded the moon.

S is for sandbags ; keep plenty at hand—
For killing incendiaries there's nothing like sand.

T 's for slit trench ; in each one at least thirty
Can shelter from bombs ; but why make it dirty ?

U 's for UXB.—a bomb unexploded.
You should not go near it, like a gun that is loaded.

V is for vehicles if you are one to lend,
The Despatch Rider Service is your lifelong friend.

W 's your Warden ; do you know his address ?
It's his job to help you if you are in distress.

X is the 'xample I hope that you will show
In Air Raid Precautions to all persons you know.

Y 's for your youngsters who must be defended,
Don't let them stray in the streets unattended.

Z is the zeal with which you assimilate
All my A. R. P. hints—or so I anticipate.

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THE SECRETARY,

National War Front Bureau,

PUDUKKOTTAI. (South India.)

PROGRAMME.

LECTURE CXXIII.

28-11-42	Municipal Office.	7.45 p.m.
29-11-42	Nirpalani ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Avoor ...	7.30 ,,
30-11-42	Karaiyur ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Kilattanayam ...	7·30 ,,
1-12-42	Andakkulam ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Killanur ...	7.30 ,,
2-12-42	C. S. M. High School.	10.00 a.m.
2-12-42	Rani's High School.	10.15 a.m.
,,	College A & B ...	10.15 ,,
,,	Konnaiyur ...	7.00 p.m.
,,	Melaveguppatti.	7.30 ,,
3-12-42	Vadavalam ...	7·00 ,,
,,	Sammattividuthi	7·30 ,,
4-12-42	Nartamalai ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Uppiliyakkudi ...	7·30 ,,

LECTURE CXXIV.

5-12-42	Municipal Office.	7.45 p.m.
6-12-42	Tiruvarangulam.	7.00 ,,
,,	Vamban ...	7.30 ,,
7-12-42	Tirumayyam ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Melur ...	7.30 ,,
8-12-42	Kulavoippatti ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Kilaiyur South ...	7.30 ,,
9-12-42	C. S. M. High School.	10.00 a.m.
9-12-42	Rani's High School.	10.15 a.m.
,,	College A & B ...	10.15 ,,
,,	Pallivasal ...	7.00 p.m.
,,	Pillamangalam.	7.30 ,,
10-12-42	P. Puduppatti ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Vendampatti ...	7.30 ,,
11-12-42	Puliyur ...	7.00 ,,
,,	Kannangudi ...	7.30 ,,

RECRUITING—ADVERTISEMENT—4 p. m.

28—11—42	Ponnamaravathi.
29—11—42	Tittanviduthi.
30—11—42	Konnaiyur.
1—12—42	Kudimiyamalai.
2—12—42	Kilanilai Puduppatti.
3—12—42	Alangudi.
4—12—42	Pappapatti.
5—12—42	Tirumayyam.
6—12—42	Maruthankoneviduthi.
7—12—42	Kiranur.
8—12—42	Vadakadu.
9—12—42	Rayavaram.
10—12—42	Kulipirai.
11—12—42	Pudukkottai.

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